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C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 000423

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STATE FOR WHA/CCA: JDHILLSMAN
AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN PASS TO AMEMBASSY GRENADA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019/11/23
TAGS: [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [PREL](#) [CU](#) [TD](#)
SUBJECT: Libertad Act Review: Trinidad and Tobago

REF: STATE 115416

CLASSIFIED BY: Len Kusnitz,, De Affairs Charge; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

11. (U) This message responds to reftel questions.

12. (C) QUESTION: Has the host country, in Post's opinion, worked to promote the advancement of democracy and human rights in Cuba?

ANSWER: Post is not aware of any GOTT initiatives promoting democracy and human rights in Cuba.

13. (C) QUESTION: Has the host country made public statements or undertaken other governmental actions, such as resolutions in the national assemblies condemning human rights abuses in Cuba; or actions in support of civil society in Cuba through host country's diplomatic missions or other fora?

ANSWER: The GOTT has made no public statements or undertaken any governmental action to condemn human rights abuses in Cuba or support civil society in Cuba.

14. (C) QUESTION: Have there been any high-level diplomatic visits, between Cuba and the host country in the past six months?

ANSWER: Prime Minister Patrick Manning, who has received ongoing medical treatment in Cuba for over a decade, met with Cuban vice-president Esteban Lazo Hernandez on July 7, 2009 after Manning's most recent medical check-up in Cuba. Press reports after the one-hour meeting indicated that Manning and Lazo discussed the political situation in Honduras as well as bilateral trade and diplomatic relations, and that they discussed a possible visit to T&T by Cuban president Raul Castro. The T&T-Cuba Joint Commission, which meets at the Foreign Minister level, is scheduled to take place in early December in Havana.

15. (C) QUESTION: What is the nature of investments that host country businesses have in Cuba?

ANSWER: Post is aware of no T&T private companies or individuals with significant presence or investments in Cuba; T&T's exports to

Cuba consist primarily of bulk commodities (chemicals, iron and steel, fertilizer) which do not require producers to establish a presence in Cuba. In May, the Minister of Finance publicly suggested a trade mission to Cuba as a follow up to the Nov 2008 Havana Trade Fair, but no such mission has taken place thus far.

¶6. (C) QUESTION: Are there any bilateral trade agreements or other cooperative agreements between host country and Cuba?

ANSWER: T&T does not have a bilateral trade agreement with Cuba, but as a member of CARICOM, T&T has ratified the trade agreement between CARICOM and Cuba. Cuba is assisting in an agricultural project (the "Tucker Valley Farm Project") in Trinidad.

¶7. (C) QUESTION: Are there any exchange programs between host country and Cuba, including but not limited to: scholarships for host country nationals to study in Cuba; Cuban-paid medical travel for host country nationals; and Cuban doctors working in the host country?

ANSWER: Cuba provides medical personnel to work in T&T. Currently there are 17 doctors and 28 nurses from Cuba working here.

¶8. (C) Post believes it is in the U.S. national interest to suspend Title III of the Libertad Act as related to Trinidad and Tobago, based on the limited nature of its economic and political interests in Cuba and its contribution to U.S. energy security as a reliable supplier of oil and gas and its importance as an economic, political, and security leader in the Eastern Caribbean.
KUSNITZ